



## Irish Estate Records

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“Estate records offer the best opportunity to trace Irish ancestors in the 18th and even 17th centuries.”

Irish genealogy Toolkit, Land and property records in Ireland, <https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/Ireland-genealogy.html>.

### Big Houses and Estates

The term “Big House” came about by Irish tenants comparing the large houses to their own small cottages.

Elizabeth Bowen, “The Big House” in Hermione Lee, ed., *The Mulberry Tree* (1986), 26.

Estates varied greatly in size from small estates of around 500 acres to those of landed magnates like the Marquis Conyngham who, by the middle of the 19th century, owned almost 160,000 acres [250 square miles].

Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland: a research guide*, (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2007), 9.

Terms of tenancy varied among the tenants. Tenancy could be yearly or tenants at will, for a certain amount of years, for lifetime, and could be passed on from one generation to another.

There were around 7,000 landed estates by the middle of the 19th century.

Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland: a research guide*, (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2007), 9.

In 1860, 90% of all land in Ireland was owned by Protestant landlords.

“The ‘Big House’ Era in Ireland,” *enjoy-irish-culture.com*, <https://www.enjoy-irish-culture.com/big-house-era.html>

By the middle of the 19th century, the typical big house was like an “artificially created island.”

Terence Dooley, *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland: A Study of Irish Landed Families, 1860-1960* (Dublin, Ireland: Wolfhound Press, 2001), 18.

During the Irish War for Independence and Civil War, 1919-1923, almost 300 big houses were burned.

Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland: a research guide*, (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2007), 9.

### Estate Records

Estate papers and rentals are among the most important sources for Irish genealogy.

Collections of estate papers can include:

- Correspondence
- Deeds

- Leases
- Maps
- Rentals/Rent Rolls

Some records are more readable than others.

Usually estate agents kept the rent rolls and other associated records.

## Where to Find Estate Records

National Archives of Ireland, Dublin

National Library of Ireland, Dublin

Trinity College, Dublin

Local repositories throughout Ireland

Family History Library, Salt Lake City

Abercorn Papers – 236 rolls of microfilm

Archdale Family Papers, 1844-1895

Earl Charlemont's Armagh Estates, 1818-1861

Dungannon Estates of the Earls of Ranfurly, 1671-1898

Fitzwilliam Estate, Coolattin, Co. Wicklow, 1847-1856

Private collections

## For Further Reading

"The 'Big House' Era in Ireland," Enjoy Irish Culture, <https://www.enjoy-irish-culture.com/big-house-era.html>.

Terence Dooley, *The Big Houses and Landed Estates of Ireland: A Research Guide* (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2007).

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland: A Study of Irish Landed Families, 1860-1960* (Dublin, Ireland: Wolfhound Press, 2001).

"Ireland Land and Property," FamilySearch Wiki, [https://familysearch.org/wiki/Ireland\\_Land\\_Property](https://familysearch.org/wiki/Ireland_Land_Property).